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# Pulpit Preaching

VOLUME 10 APRIL, 1957 NUMBER 4

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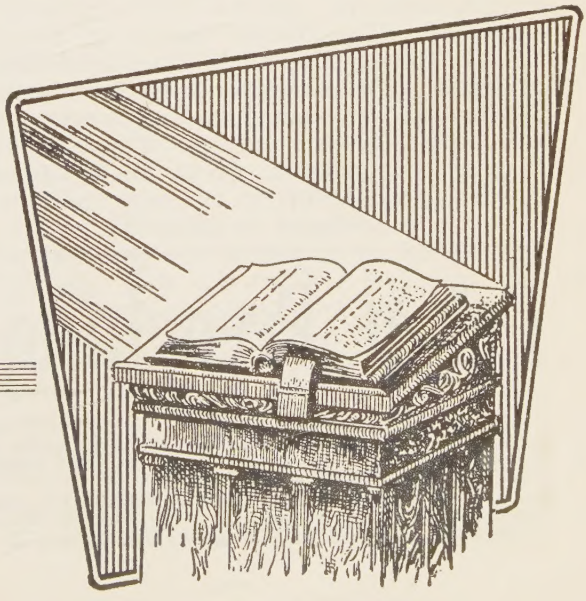

*A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS*

## Editorial Comments

This month's first theme, "Death: The Christian Perspective," is included because of requests from several PULPIT PREACHING readers. The writers of these sermons would, of course, suggest that when local customs differ from the observations they make concerning funeral practices the local traditions should be followed. Often a minister may feel, however, the need for offering wise counsel to his parishioners in terms of more meaningful and Christian worship.

The second theme is "A Sense of Holiness."

Next month's themes will be "Christ in Life's Equation" and "On Top of Life." The main emphases for the June issue will be "Searchlight on Self" and "Table of the Lord" and for July, "Persistence in Prayer" and "Converted Pocketbooks."

———o———

### BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Louis H. Evans in *Make Your Faith Work* examines the workability of the Gospel through an examination of the book of James (using Phillips' vigorous translation). These sermons highlight the practical implications of New Testament Christianity under such topics as "Is Your Religion Words or Works," "Is Your Tongue Converted," and "Do You Own a Peaceful Heart?" (Fleming H. Revell Co., 159 pp., $2.50.)

*Protestant Preaching in Lent* by Harold J. Ockenga is a volume of sermon outlines, largely expository in nature, and representing the evangelical teachings of the season of Lent. Seven series, each containing four to eight sermons, concern Lenten preaching emphases: "The Dinner Parties of Jesus," "The Suffering Messiah," "Questions Asked of Jesus," among others. Many new Lenten themes are represented in these pages, and new, vivid interpretations of traditional themes are included. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 285 pp., $3.95.)

(Continued on page 11)

## Worth Quoting

*Edited by E. Paul Hovey*

Man is like a child in a family. He can tolerate much deprivation, much sickness, even much pain, if only he be securely at home, sure of belonging, confident of being loved. But if these central assurances are lacking, then food and shelter and toys in abundance can leave him empty and insecure in the center of his life. So it is with man in his world.

—Angus Dun, *The Saving Person* (Harper)

* * * *

Because we are unable to meet the heavy demands on our love, our children can never receive an adequate love and security from us. That must come from elsewhere—from a forever-loving Creator. If we could supply such infinite love, Dr. Reuel Howe in *Man's Need and God's Action* goes on to say, our children would never need Christ as Saviour! We parents would fill that role. The truth, however, is that both our children and we ourselves need redemption, and we can acknowledge it together . . . While parent's love does have a way of compensating for errors, the Christian parent must never forget that the source of all loving relationship is God in Christ.

—J. C. Wynn, *How Christian Parents Face Family Problems* (Westminster)

* * * *

If Christ dwells in the family circle, parents are held in honor and children practice obedience. —E. C. Peters

* * * *

The Old Testament has a significant story about a husband and wife in ancient Shunem who enlarged their home to make room for religion. The Prophet Elisha occasionally passed through the village, and the couple decided that the spiritual life of the family would be enriched by providing a place which would always be ready for the

(Continued on page 11)


# Pulpit Preaching

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NENIEN C. McPHERSON, JR.
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# Death: The Christian Perspective

## trength Through Sorrow

NENIEN C. McPHERSON, JR., Grace Methodist Church, Dayton, Ohio

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:35, 38-39

Two British explorers came across a tomb Egypt which had been sealed for over ree thousand years. They opened the tomb d found an exquisitely carved sarcopha- s of a child, above it this inscription:

"Oh my life, my love, my little one,
would God I had died for thee!"

They backed our into the sunshine with ar-dimmed eyes and heads uncovered, seal- the tomb, and left the parent and child their eternal vigil.

Sorrow is as old as th human race and is e common experience of men everywhere. grows out of the fact of our "together- ss." If we could avoid giving ourselves in ve and friendship to each other, there ould be very little of mourning in the rth, yet such a life would have little mean- g. S. R. Lysaght, the Irish poet, has ex- essed it in these words:

If love should count you worthy,
and should design,
One day to seek your door and be
your guest,
Pause! ere you draw the bolt and
bid him rest,
If in your old contentment, you
would remain;
For not alone he enters; in his train
Are angels of the mist, the lonely
guest,
Dreams of the unfulfilled the
unpossessed,
And sorrow, and Life's immemorial
pain.
He wakes desires you never may
forget,
He shows you stars you never
saw before,
He makes you share with him
forevermore
The burdens of the world's divine
regret.
How wise you were to open not!
And yet
How poor if you should turn him
from the door?

None of the great gifts of life ever come to us in solitariness; yet when we throw our hearts open to love and friendship, we know that inevitably we shall experience intense sorrow and share life's pain.

Only Christ, of all the teachers, has had the audacity to pronounce grief a blessing, to say; "Happy is he that mourns!"

### REALISM OF JESUS

Yet sorrow and mourning are not good things in themselves; they are not values to be sought. No one in his right mind ever has or ever would seek sorrow. There will be enough about which to grieve without going out of our way to find it. Jesus was well aware of that fact. "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" that is you will know suffering and persecution and sorrow.

Jesus was realistic in his approach. He never closed his eyes to the facts of life. Suffering and pain and sorrow were not for him merely errors of mortal mind. They were real. They must be faced. One's philosophy of life must be such as to enable him to deal with the problems of life so that he can be victorious when the hour of suffering and pain and sorrow come upon him. It is not only the evil — the guilty, the wicked — who suffer, the good — the best of men and women — suffer also. The Psalmist was giving voice to a false confidence when he said: "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

It is not true that the godly escape sorrow;

mourning is a universal experience and man's religious faithfulness will give him strength to endure it, but it will not deliver him from tribulation.

Jesus never suggests that God sends sorrow upon us. God's plan and purpose for mankind is that we shall grow by the only way we can grow — by facing problems, by developing intelligence and character. Through facing difficulties, running the risk of making mistakes and learning from our errors, we develop strength to endure. God seems to have made this world a "vale of soul-making," to use Keats' phrase.

Character and personality and intelligence cannot be developed from without, cannot be forced upon an individual — not even by God — they must grow from within. A robot — an automatic "man" without a soul, electrically controlled by a sensitive mechanism that seems almost able to think — can be constructed full-grown, ready to function, but a real man must develop himself through his choices. The best analogy of the relationship between God and the individual man is that of the parent and child. Just as a father, watching a child learning to walk, knows he cannot afford to help the child too much else he would never learn the art of walking, so God must patiently watch his human children make mistakes — bringing suffering and sorrow upon themselves. Yet like a human parent God is afflicted in all our affliction and is wounded in all our transgressions. If God is like Christ, he is moved by our infirmity; He suffers with all his children in their grief. God never sends sorrow upon us.

## BLESSING OR DEFEAT?

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Whether sorrow shall be a blessing or a tragic defeat depends on what we do with it, how we respond to the tragedy that comes upon us. Sorrow can be very devastating. Mourning can turn to bitterness and sterile cynicism.

We can rebel against life and against God. We can curse God and vow never to have anything to do with Him the rest of our lives; men have done that and men continue to do it. What is even worse — we may stoop to self-pity. We may cry out: "Why is it this tragedy has happened to me?" as if somehow God ought to save us in a special way from such difficulties. Once a man begins to feel sorry for himself, a poison begins to eat at his soul until it will destroy him completely, unless he can find release from it.

We may develop a form of permanent grief, which is really a type of worry. If grief has settled down upon us in that fashion, then we must face it as we would any other worry. We must ask ourselves what it is that we are actually worried about at the moment. If it is something that has already happened or something that is going to happen in the future, we must do what we can to rectify our mistake or prepare to face the future threat. More than that no man can do. Relief from worry can be secured as we lose ourselves in the service of our fellowmen, thus serving God and being strengthened by faith in him.

Sorrow can be creative, if we accept it as one of the inevitables of life that is not being visited upon us alone but is the lot of all of God's children. If we accept it in such a spirit, we ought to learn something from it, to find a deeper meaning of life because we are now linked with others who mourn and have mourned. If that is our spirit, then we can understand what the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews had in mind when he says about Christ: "Though he was a Son, yet learned he . . . by the things which he suffered."

Even God's Son had to learn by the processes of suffering and sorrow and tribulation.

## FROM THE INSIDE

The central figure in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* is Scarlett O'Hara. Her father had been killed in an accident. There was no minister available for his funeral. Will, the man who had been helping on the farm and who was to marry one of her sisters, asked for permission to say something about him: "He could be licked from the inside. . . . What the whole world couldn't do, his own heart could. . . . There ain't nothin' *From The Outside* can lick any of us."

That is something we ought to remember. Whenever sorrow gets us down, it is because we have lowered our defense from within, because our faith is weak, our vision of the reality of God's presence has grown dim. We will never be defeated unless we are defeated from the inside.

There was a student who had gone through four years of college on his crutches, stumbling along from class to class. Most of the boys and girls on the campus were careful never to refer to his infirmity. They thought he would be sensitive about it. He won many scholastic honors, doing his job without asking special favors. In his senior year his roommate grew courageous enough to ask

m how he came to be crippled. He replied, nfantile paralysis." Then his friend said: ou have always been so optimistic and full joy, how in the world can you face life avely and courageously with such a hand-ap?" "The secret is," he said, "it never uched my heart." You see, it is what hap-ns on the inside of us that makes all the fference between victory and defeat.

So Edwin Markham assures us:

Defeat may serve as well as victory
To shake the soul and let the glory out.
When the great oak is straining in the wind,
The boughs drink in new beauty, and the trunk
Sends down a deeper root on the windward side.
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief
Can know the mighty rapture. Sorrows come
To stretch our spaces in the heart for joy.

## STRENGTH THROUGH COMFORT

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they all be comforted." Our English word omfort" comes from two Latin words um" and "fortis" and means to have rength, to be strengthened. Blessed are ose who mourn for they shall be strength-ed, they shall discover a power which they d not known before. The Greek word here the same word that in John's Gospel is anslated in the King James version as the omforter." Jesus, realizing that he is going leave his disciples, turns to them and ys: unless I go away the Comforter — the oly Spirit — cannot come, but when he mes he will lead you into all truth. "Para-ete" is the Greek word here. The Revised andard Version has it "the Counselor" and at is more nearly in harmony with the eaning of the Greek word, for it is a word ken from the law courts and means one ho comes to our aid, stands alongside of , our attorney of defense, who comes to lp in our hour of difficulty. This Beati-de may be paraphrased: "Blessed are ose who mourn, for they shall have the oly Spirit alongside of them to strengthen d to guide."

God does not bring tragedy upon us. evertheless, our extremity is often God's st opportunity to do for us what he has en wanting to do all the time. God is a eking God, the God who is like Christ. He does not wait for us to come and seek his favors, but rather seeks us out that he may do us good. He is the Good Shepherd, the love that never lets us go, the love that never tires, is never defeated, that never gives up. God tries in many ways to reach us. We may say "no" but God keeps on trying. Sometimes in the hour of sorrow, God has his best opportunity to do for us what he has been anxious to do under other conditions.

For living faith in a God who is like Christ gives meaning to our lives, causes us to know that this is not all there is to life, that this is a training ground, a vale of soul-making, that there is a life in us, a quality of spirit, that cannot be extinguished when the physical body is worn out, that life continues on yonder and opportunities for growth and development and service are ours beyond the bounds of our imagination. No wonder John Wesley at the end of a very productive life could say: "The best of all is, God is with us!"

He could take the next step without fear, without anxiety, for he had discovered the meaning of life and the consciousness of a love that would not let him go.

It brings perspective. We see that our sorrow is no longer an isolated moment of time, but somehow it fits into the great pattern which God is weaving for his children.

## COMFORTING OTHERS

Finally, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" — not only be comforted by God's sustaining love, but they shall comfort others. There is a ministry of comfort which is open only to those who themselves have known the depth of sorrow.

Edwin McNeill Poteat has put in four lines this truth:

He cannot heal who has not suffered much,
For only sorrow sorrow understands;
They will not come for healing at our touch
Who have not seen the scars upon our hands.

Thornton Wilder in one of his three-minute plays, entitled *The Angel That Troubled the Waters,* uses the incident in the New Testament of the angel who stood by the pool of Bethesda and troubled the waters as the sick gathered there. When the waters were troubled the suffering might be put down into it and their infirmities healed. In his play, a doctor who has an infirmity, and who has given himself in the service of others comes to the pool that he too may go into

its waters when the angel comes. The angel sees him there and says to him: "Stand back. Healing is not for you. Without your wound, where would your power be that sends your low voice trembling into the hearts of men? We ourselves, the very angels of God in heaven, cannot persuade the wretched and blundering children of earth as can one human being broken on the wheels of living. In love's service only wounded soldiers will do."

During the war, one of my best friends was a merchant in Thomasville, Georgia. He had two sons. Both intended to be doctors. The older was in medical school and continued there, but the younger one gave up his college work to enter the Air Corps. He was in training to be a fighter pilot — that was his chosen way of serving his country. He had almost completed his training. In the last test, up about ten thousand feet, he blacked out. He crashed and was killed. It was a great blow to this man and his wife, but they took it in their stride because of the faith they had in God. During the rest of the war, when anyone within two hundred miles of Thomasville had a loved one to die in the service, this man and his wife were among the first to arrive to lay their hearts along side of the one who had fresh sorrow. Great strength came to them because they were comforting others as they themselves had been strengthened by the spirit of God during their sorrow.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be strengthened." They shall be strengthened by one who is afflicted in all of our afflictions, one who is touched by our infirmities, one who is the living God of love, who never deserts us. Therefore Jesus was speaking the most profound truth when he said: "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted" by God — more than that they shall be used by God to comfort others. There is no ministry higher than that, for it is reserved for those in whom the Christ-like spirit dwells abundantly through the comfort and strength they have found through trust in him.

## A Matter of Life or Death

GLENN E. HANNEMAN, The First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

In Olive Schreiner's "Story of an African Farm," there is the unforgottable scene where Bonaparte comes upon Waldo, to find him engrossed in working over a little mechanical advice of wheels and chips of wood. Waldo had worked on the affair for more than nine months, and it represented a great deal of love and patience as well as ingenuity. Bonaparte made a show of interest in the creation, much to the lad's delight, asked questions, examined and tested it. And then, suddenly, in an unexplainable fit of temper, he swept the device to the ground and crushed it into the sand with his heel.

Now, in response to such a loathsome act, one's mind can turn very easily to matters of life and death. "Is this the way God treats human personality? Are we brought into being to live and learn and grow and create only to be swept at last into the dust and ground into nothingness by the heel of time?" This has been the central question of life since man first became aware of the dignity of his soul.

It was to this very question that the writer of the Gospel of John brought God's answer in the person of Jesus Christ. Lazarus had died; Mary and Martha were in despair. Jesus had been delayed. But when word finally came that he approached the house, Martha ran to meet him with the words tumbling from her mouth: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Then came a statement that has lifted the face of the world: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It is a stupendous claim, this statement of Jesus; but there are two indisputable facts which stand behind it.

### GOD STILL RAISES PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD

The first is this: God still raises people from the dead. Now, this is what I mean: any person who does not feel a spiritual need is dead inside. We are not made simply to put in eight hours a day, cash the paycheck, have a little fun, and perhaps do a good turn somewhere along the way. *We Are Made For God!* "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they find rest in Thee," one of the saints has put it. But God is not willing to leave the matter there. He has His ways of working, so that our deepest nature is constantly struggling to rise to the surface.

Lloyd C. Douglas was striking this note of faith in his reconstruction of Jesus' inter-

iew with Zaccheus by the roadside. You now the story, I'm sure, how Jesus aprised Zaccheus of the fact that he wanted o have dinner with him. Zaccheus thought, I'll entertain this carpenter in a manner fit or a king," but somehow in spite of every ffort, the dinner seemed to be unsuccessful. inally, when they had finished eating, Zacneus sent the servants from the room, and owly and painfully raised his eyes to look quarely, for the first time, into the eyes f Jesus. He even raised his forearm to nield himself from the searching gaze, but strange vision possessed him. He rose sudenly, went to the door, and shouted to the aiting multitude, "I have resolved to give alf my goods to the poor, and if I have efrauded any man, I shall make restitution." Amid the shouts of gratitude rising rom the crowd, Zaccheus returned to the ible. "A great salvation has come to your ouse today," said Jesus. "Tell me, what did ou see that made you desire this peace?" Good Master," came the reply, "I saw, mirored in your eyes, the face of the Zaccheus was meant to be!" He was raised from ne dead to a newness of life.

That's what Jesus meant when he spoke o Martha, "He that believeth in me, though e were dead, yet shall he live."

It happens in our time, too. Take, for inance, the testimony of Hugh Redwood, a romient member of the staff of the "London Daily News." "If you should ask me by hat authority I talk about the power of hrist to change human nature, I should re- y to you simply (and God knows without ne word or thought of boasting) because e has changed *my* nature. I can look anydy in the face today: my friends, my colagues, and what perhaps is the most diffiult of all, my own household and family, nd be sure that they know, as I know, that am really and literally a new creature in hrist Jesus since the day when he came into y life."

How jaded and forlorn our lives sometimes become. And yet something stirs down eep within, to remind us that we are hunry, that somehow we are incomplete, that ll our success or failures, all our attempts t living have been lacking something, and nat, is God, bringing us back to life. God till raises people from the dead who become ware of their spiritual need and seek the ay of Christ.

## THE FACT OF IMMORTALITY

The second indisputable fact is this: Those ho walk in newness of life through Christ become increasingly convinced that it never ends.

Some of the most heart-rending experiences I have ever had have come from standing at the bedside of persons afraid to die. How inevitable it is. How final for them! But not so for those who walk in newness of life. The words of Sophie Tucker, in paying tribute to Irving Berlin, America's great song writer, might well be lifted from their context and applied to this truth about the blessings of Christian life: "What a wonderful feeling it must be to know while you're still alive that you're immortal!" She may have been talking about music, but she unwittingly struck a note for Christian faith. Death for the growing Christian increasingly becomes a part of life. Just as we have grown from childhood to adolescence to adulthood each phase leaving behind some part of our experience, so death is another, leading us on to a new and larger and more wonderful life.

Some time ago Dr. W. Crosby Bell moved on beyond our understanding to live with God. His influence as a teacher was immeasurable, but his last words have probably meant more to his students than any other. His wife, knowing of his oft-expressed wish to face death while still conscious, told him that the end was near. And as part of his final conversation he sent, through her, these words to his students: "Tell the boys that I've grown surer of God every year of my life, and I've never been so sure as I am right now. Why it's all so! It's a fact! It's a dead certainty! I'm so glad to find that I haven't the least shadow of shrinking or uncertainty. I've been preaching and teaching these things all my life, and I'm so interested to find that all we've been believing and hoping is so. I've always thought so, and now that *I'm* right up against it, *I know!* I can see now that death is just the smallest thing, just an incident, that it means nothing."

What a wonderful thing to know while you're still alive that you're immortal, to see death for what it really is, to cast aside its curse. This is the gift of God in His Son, the Lord Christ, that whosoever *lives* and believes in him, shall never die, but shall move on to the next task beyond the portal.

## THE ASSURANCE OF FULFULLMENT

Somehow this faith in Christ opens the door of understanding still wider, for not only does it remove the haunting spector of death, but brings assurance of completion

and fulfillment that never can be known without Christ.

Take the experience of Nels Ferre, one of our most promising and respected young theologians. He said, after laying his lovely little daughter to rest, "My deepest experiences and my truest seeing require a far larger view of God than ever before. Our time and life here on earth are only a stammering beginning of God's great plan and purpose for us. When we buried our daughter God was with us. Instead of an empty feeling there was a Presence and a Power. Instead of an empty feeling there was the endless togetherness in Reality. What was barely begun here shall be continued in God's unemptiable time."

Is that incredible to you? Not so to those who have looked at the face of death through the framework of the Christian faith. Every facet of the nature of God revealed in the life of Christ points toward fulfillment, wholeness, togetherness, to make us say, It is his will that we *know* the fullness of life, the satisfaction of completed work; the joys of love and family.

Now, the key to all this power, of which we speak, lies in one's personal acceptance and belief. It is true that Jesus made the statement. But then he said, "Do you believe this?" And it was not until Martha said, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God," that the power came into her life. There was no power in the lives of Peter and James and John and Paul until they accepted and acted on this fact. For all who have believed, there has come a new dimension into life which has dfied explanation, yet has been indubitably true.

## When Ends Life's Transient Dream

ARMIN C. OLDSEN, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Ohio

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.* —John 5:35

There are sermons in stones, there are books in running brooks, there are important lessons even in leaves. And in what impressive fashion they teach it. Countless numbers of them cover the ground and are swept hither and yon by the giant broom that is the wind; they are raked into piles large and small; they are burned in the gutter. Once the leaf receives no more nourishment through the stem that held it; it falls from the tree that produced it; it becomes part of a great bonfire and is turned into ashes; or it comes to rest in some dark, moist corner to rot and decay. Like the grass and the flower of the field, leaves flourish for a season, they fall, they disappear, and the place where once they fluttered knows them no more. And this is the lesson they teach: so also is man.

Sin has broken the holy ties which once united man with his Creator. Now man is blown to and fro over the face of the earth in quest of adventure, rest, a vacation, a change in occupation, an improvement in health, until the blast of death whirls him finally into the dark corners of the grave where he returns to the dust of the ground and is seen no more. At that point the lesson of the leaves must stop. The comparison must be carried no further. The billions of dry leaves we see return no more to the parent trees from whence they came. With man it is different. Man can return to God and live forever. To learn that important lesson, we must turn from the leaves to the Holy Scriptures. In the twenty-fifth verse of the fifth chapter of his Gospel, St. John quotes Christ as saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Over our meditation let us place the familiar hymn words: "When ends life's transient dream."

### THE END MUST COME

Everything in life has an end. This day will soon be over. A journey cannot last forever; neither can a song. A task must finally be completed or dismissed. In time every building, every machine, every road will have served its purpose and will be replaced. Every nation eventually disappears from the stage where history is played, and so every life must end, too. A noted physician recently made the statement that in his opinion the life expectancy of the average citizen of the world will in time be raised to seventy-five years, but scarcly beyond that. Sooner or later the end must come. Nothing in life is more certain. Every child born into the world immediately begins to move toward the inevitable end of life. King Philip of Macedonia is said to have had a servant whose duty it was to wake him every morn

ng with the impressive words, "Philip, rise! and remember that you are mortal." ll life on earth has in it the germ of death. ife's transient dream will end for each of s.

Usually we do not like to think or speak bout an end, and yet, often there is nothing elancholy or saddening about it. When you re traveling it is a relief to come to the end f your journey. That is the point for which ou set out. A day well-spent in useful labor ay have its pleasant evening. A task comleted satisfactorily is a joy to think about. Why should the end of life's transient dream e fearful? It is common to all mankind. All efore us, the great and the small, have come o it, and we will be followed by all others. esus was not afraid of the end of life, neithr was Paul. In fact, the great Apostle said e had "a desire to depart." If life has been roperly lived, its end holds no terrors. If game has been well played, it ends in trimph. If a race has been well run, its finish victory. If a life has been well lived, as od would have it lived, its end is a crown, crown of endless life.

## BACKGROUND OF ETERNITY

Too often everything seems to end when nds life's transient dream. For one whose fe is ended, reality apparently has stopped ith the finality of a book that has been losed, when the last chapter has been read, nd that has been put forever back on the helf. But it is the earthly reality that has topped. There is another reality, reality hat is greater and infinitely more imporant. Before we contemplate the end of life's ransient dream, let us try to see life in its roper perspective. Let us establish a backround that is bigger and more permanent, nd that extends on both sides of life.

It is easier to study a jewel when it is ing on a piece of black velvet. We will betr understand life if we view it against the ackground of eternity. Have you ever restled seriously with the problem of eterity how it goes on and on and on? The ind of man is too small fully to grasp it. lmost of necessity when we deal with eterity, we speak of it in terms of time. Somene has likened eternity to an immense clock hich says, "Tick," in one century and, Tock," in the next. Eternity belongs to God, nd God is a timeless being. All of God's lans started in eternity, and they go on n eternity. Ever and again the plans of God ouch the earth and our lives. That experince we call time. Our life begins and ends n certain dates. The lifetime of God is eternal, without beginning and without ending.

## ETERNITY IN OUR HEARTS

Now contrast our life's transient dream with eternity. What a brief span it is, bounded by birth and death and between them, sometimes only a second — or less — and rarely more than a hundred years. But that is not the whole story. In the midst of constant change, in the face of what we call life and death, man belongs to another order. He is related to something lasting, something that knows no change, no decay, and no end. We have a bit of eternity in our hearts. God gives each of us a soul that was made to live forever. A picture has more reach if there is sky in it. Unless we see beyond this present world, above the treetops with their fading leaves, the eternal calm of the heavens, it is a poor thing for our eyes to look at, or our hearts to love, or our hands to toil on. If there is nothing beyond this world, life is at best a downward journey.

A young man whose life's transient dream is about to come to a close "when it was just getting interesting," as he himself put it, writes in desperation: "I have been told to comfort myself with the assurance that I will live on in the memory of my friends. There is little comfort in that for me because I know that memory fades quickly. I have been told to comfort myself with the thought that my influence will be felt long after I am gone. There is little comfort in that for me because I know my influence has not been great, nor has it always been good. I have been told to comfort myself with the thought that some of the work that I did as a carpenter while I was on earth, the houses that I helped build, will stand long after I am gone. There is little comfort in that for me because I know that the houses, too, will eventually disappear. Has Christianity any comfort for me?" It certainly has!

## SOMETHING MORE

When ends life's transient dream there must be something more. And there is! When ends life's transient dream, yours and mine, the eternal Christ whom we have learned to know by faith and to serve out of love will call us forth to the life that lasts forever. Let there be no doubt about it. Christ said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." To someone who has never heard it, nor taken time to consider it, that must be a startling an-

nouncement. "Marvel not at this," says Christ. The announcement is not something new. It is the same thing he said on other occasions. Sometimes under other circumstances and in other words. It is part of the theme that runs through the whole Bible.

If there is no life after death, the Bible itself has lost its soul. To the Ephesians Paul wrote, after their conversion, "And you hath Christ made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sin." What was true of the Ephesians in their natural state is true of all men, even as Paul in the same letter includes himself with the others when he writes: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath Christ quickened us." What God said at the beginning of time, "The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," actually came to pass so that all men died through sin. For, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men for that all had sinned."

Christ, the Son of the eternal God, has everlasting life in himself. He said, "For as the Father has life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself." As God is eternal, so Christ is eternal. As God is the source of all life and has all life, so Christ has all life. From his lips fell the announcement, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Christ came to earth to give us back our life, the life that had been lost through sin. That was why he died on the cross of Calvary. That was the bitter cup from which he prayed to be relieved in the garden; but it could not be. No life of everlasting joy was possible for man except through Christ's death. God himself revealed that. It was known already in the Old Testament. To Nicodemus Christ said in their conversation at night, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Christ said also, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

## UNENDING LIFE

And so the end of life's transient dream can be the beginning of eternity's unending life. Life on earth would be quite meaningless if it were not so. This is what makes it so supremely important. What we believe now, the goal we set for ourselves now, the way we live now, determines the road we shall travel forever and the company we shall keep eternally. Once more, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." What a marvelous work that will be! Our bodies and the bodies of all men, returned to dust, dissolved into the elements of the earth, taken up again — it may be into a hundred other organic bodies — these shall be raised again, glorious to behold with the bloom and vigor of undying youth, and shall be forever joined with the soul with which they lived in this transient life. What a wonderful thought! What a blessed truth! How we ought to treasure it in a transient world and meditate on it; not so much to understand it — for that we cannot fully do — but to impress upon ourselves the greatness that is in store for us when ends life's transient dream if we have accepted Christ as our Savior. All about us are unnumbered evidences of God's power to create and sustain. To create seems to be more difficult than to resurrect. Creation is an indisputable and accomplished fact. Resurrection can be just as real in faith.

One point remains. When ends life's transient dream all men shall appear before Christ as judge. Today and as long as time runs on Christ invites all men to accept him by faith as the Forgiver of sins and the Giver of eternal life. Christ has two hands: the hand that forgives and bestows salvation and the hand that judges and condemns. One points to heaven; the other points to hell. If we refuse to take the hand that reaches out to us eternal life as a gift of God's love, the hand of God's judgment will inevitably get hold of us and condemn us forever. When ends life's transient dream they that have taken God's hand of mercy by faith in Christ will be separated unto the resurrection of eternal life and they that have rejected it will be separated unto the resurrection of eternal damnation. No preacher thought that up; it is God's clearly revealed truth. Across three thousand years the Psalmist invites you now, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

When the life of Dwight Moody was drawing to a close he wrote, "Some day now you will read in the paper that Dwight Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all; out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal."

Ray Palmer closed his stately hymn "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" with the stanza from which our theme is taken:

When ends life's transient dream—
(what then?)
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll—(what then?)
(Why) Blest Savior, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove.
And bear me safe above
A ransomed soul. Amen.

## BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

*The Message of the Fourth Gospel,* a commentary on John by Eric L. Titus, will become a constant companion for interpreters of the Gospels. Part I contains discussions on John's literary method, the doctrines of the Logos and the Spirit. Part II is a section by section commentary in which natural units are featured, something verse by verse studies cannot accomplish. The author's translation of John further enhances the usefulness of this volume in which the author describes John as dependent on the Synoptics and Paul rather than on the Hellenic tradition. (Abingdon Press, 253 pp., $3.50.)

*The Dimension of Depth* by Edwin McNeill Poteat shows how Jesus adds a vital new dimension to life. Jesus, discipleship and life's crises are considered in terms of the dimension of depth. Pungent thought and wording, discerning insights and creative imagination combine to make this book revealing interpretation of the Gospels in the light of their eternal truths. The homiletic suggestions of the book are varied and compelling. (Harper & Brothers, 114 pp., $2.)

John Knox' *The Integrity of Preaching* (The James A. Gray lectures at Duke University) is a significant plea for biblical preaching. The author's burden is that sermons, which rightly understand and interpret the Bible, will more than match the needs of modern man. This book, written in a communicative manner which many scholars cannot command, is a persuasive challenge and will lead many pastors to new sermon directions. (Abingdon Press, 96 pp., $1.75.)

*Through Troubled Waters* by William H. Armstrong is a record of a personal, domestic tragedy and a testimony of faith. Few books so convincingly mirror the coming of death to a home and the coming of hope to the bereaved. When the author's young and beautiful wife died, neither he nor their three small children were prepared for the adjustments which became inevitable. The book cannot be read with dry eyes nor without a sense of ultimate victory. For an understanding of both tragedy and triumph, this book is a book no pastor should bypass. (Harper & Brothers, 86 pp., $2.)

Roy L. Smith in *Don't Kid Yourself* finds spiritual truths in the slang expressions of American life. The sermons sparkle with life and spirit, and contain the kind of quotations, anecdotes and illustrations which have made the author one of the most frequently quoted religious writers. Slang phrases from which Dr. Smith gleans substantial messages include: Who Do You Think You Are, So What, Where's the Fire, and Make Mine the Same. (Abingdon Press, 126 pp., $2.)

*Prayers for the Pulpit* by Walter G. Gray contain 111 prayers which are adaptable for pulpit use. The prayers are consistently splendid, intimate, timely and relevant. Some of the prayers are suitable for special days and seasons; others emphasize the overcoming of spiritual indifference, neglect of churchmanship, spiritual needs and the worship of devout people. Although written for church services, the prayers will also deepen private devotions. (Fleming H. Revell Co., 127 pp., $2.)

A real boon for pastors is the new Reflection Book series published by the Association Press. Printed as paperback editions and priced at fifty cents, the first volumes to be released are: *Basic Christian Writings,* edited by Stanley I. Stuber; *The Life of Christ in Poetry,* edited by Hazel Davis Clark; *Religious Living* by Georgia Harkness; *A Short Primer for Protestants* by James H. Nichols; *Words to Change Lives,* 58 brief sermons by leading preachers; and *What Christianity Says about Sex, Love and Marriage* by Roland H. Bainton.

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## WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

use of the man of God. So they made a prophet's chamber on the wall.

Doubtless it took toil and time to build the extra room, but the effort of the Shunammites was abundantly repaid. Their young son was suddenly stricken with a fatal illness. When everything else had failed, the

boy was revived by the vitalizing contact of the prophet with the lifeless body. Do not stumble over the miracle, but meditate upon the larger miracle which it symbolizes. Religion has a quickening power which is sometimes the only force that is adequate to the deepest needs of the home.

The prophet's chamber on the wall stands for the spiritual influences that ought to be brought into modern family life. The average home is too small and cramped. It lacks an upper room. It has inadequate space for the transforming and healing values of religion. Christ is crowded out, even as at birth he was crowded out of the Bethlehem inn. . . . . Religion must be put back into the family life.

—Walter D. Cavert

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Other people's harvests are always the best harvests, but one's children are always the best children.

—Mencius

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Modern version: If at first you don't succeed, blame your parents.

—Marcelene Cox

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Many married women would be happier and their homes more successful if they looked upon their husbands as persons to enjoy and not as possessions to be owned.

—Thomas Dreier

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We must strive to overcome the apathy, ignorance and guile which nourish the twin enemies of our freedom — crime and communism. Let us never forget that strength and good character, like charity, begin at home. So long as the American home is nurtured by the spirit of our Father in Heaven and is a center of learning and living, America will remain secure.

—J. Edgar Hoover

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Train up a child and away he goes.

—Marcelene Cox

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A young woman told the story of her married life. Her husband had been an orphan who never had a chance to go to school or to learn a trade. He earned little money. He trusted her with all he earned. He did not drink, and never went out for pleasure without her.

She said: "Do you think it hurts me because he cannot give me fine clothes, when every day he tells me I am the best gift God ever gave to him? Do you suppose I mind working to help a man like that? His love makes everything worth while." . . . . Christianity places love at the apex of life. It is the highest and noblest of all virtues.

—Sydney Rowe

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The concept of the family of God widens in concentric circles as the Biblical account unfolds. As it widens, it deepens. In the Old Testament, we read of a covenant people who stand in a peculiar relation to God: First a man, then a family, a clan, and a nation. Participation in the common privileges was determined by blood and sealed by the rite of circumcision. In the New Testament, the horizon widens to include all mankind, and the more intimate figure of the family is used to describe the relations of the members to one another and to God the Father.

—William D. Chamberlain

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One woman said, "We ought to let the teachers teach and the parents parent." She meant that the school has absorbed many functions which belong in other hands.

—Joseph H. Fichter

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No matter how orderly a woman is by nature, it is a mistake for her to be always putting her husband in his place.

—Chinese proverb

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Children will outgrow their need of affection and demonstrativeness, but husbands won't.

—Dr. Paul Popenoe

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In the marriage ceremony of the Cherokee Indians the couple would join hands across a running stream to signify that forever their lives would flow together.

—Charles L. Allen, *God's Psychiatry* (Revell)

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Note to the newly married: The longer a bill runs, the harder it is to catch.

—Marcelene Cox

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Having a Christian home means far more than a houseful of nice people who treat each other fairly kindly and who go to church fairly regularly. It means a home where Christ is known and loved and served; where children come to know him through their parents; where Christian training of the children is placed ahead of the social ambition of the mother and the business ambition of the father; where the father is determined to carry on his business in conformity with the mind of Christ; where both

Father and Mother are determined to make their social life conform to high Christian ideals; and where eyes see far horizons of a world to be won for Christ.

—Paul Calvin Payne

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Your home life will be smoother when you recognize that you can never keep the marriage circle square with a triangle.

—James J. O'Reilly

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Mother said to him, "You must do as I tell you." He replied, "Why should I?" The mother found it difficult, but she said, "You must do what I tell you because I have had to do what my mother told me, and she had to do what her mother told her." "H'm," said John, "I wonder who started that silly game."

—Leslie D. Weatherhead, *Psychology and Life* (Abingdon)

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No one can decide for parents how early their children ought to go to church, but the danger is of waiting too long rather than starting too soon. It is bad psychology that sets children string off home after Sunday school while their parents pass them on their way to church. Only stupid parents could fail to find in any church service something that could be made of interest and concern to children, if they set themselves to it. The trouble is that taking children to church is burdensome; parents want the service for themselves. They must think in terms of children, instead.

—Cleland B. McAfee

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Lord Roberts said, "In our home we have observed for fifty years the custom of having daily worship, and I know nothing like it to hold the family together." Love is a spiritual experience. One of the reasons for the breaking up of many homes is the failure of husbands and wives to relate themselves continually to God, who is love.

—Schuyler E. Garth

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*Newsweek* reports that "people are not antagonistic to religion. They just don't know. But they'd like to know."

It has been said that prayer is often "plain, manly determination heading in the right direction." If I could get one message over to the youth of this world, it would be that success in life does not depend on genius. Any young man of ordinary intelligence, who is morally sound, aboveboard in his dealings, and not afraid of work, should succeed in spite of obstacles and handicaps, if he plays the game fairly and keeps everlastingly at it.

—J. C. Penny

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Another day I stepped on a flower and I cried, "Poor flower, I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm sorry." I picked it up and noticed how sweetly the flower's perfume came up to me, then I passed it to Father.

He held it in his hand and drew a deep breath, and smiled. Then he looked at the sky and sort of talked to himself, as if he were remembering something: "'What is forgiveness?' a deaf mute was asked, and he wrote on a piece of paper, 'Forgiveness is the odor which a flower yields when trampled upon.'" Then he loked back at me. "Don't cry," he said. "The flower's perfume tells you that you are forgiven." This comforted me, and later, when I heard him preaching one day, he told his flock what a Persian poet had said about forgiveness:

The sandal-tree perfumes when riven
The ax which laid it low;
Let man, who hopes to be forgiven,
Forgive and bless his foe.

—Olive Knox, *Mrs. Minister* (Westminster)

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Churches deny their faith when they venture only so far as they can be sure that they can see the way.

—Roswell Barnes

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There is no love which does not become help. —Paul Tillich

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A man who lives not by what he loves but what he hates is a sick man.

—Archibald MacLeish

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When God is going to do something Wonderful, he begins with a Difficulty. If it is going to be Very Wonderful, he begins with an Impossibility.

—*Clear Horizons*

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Because the communists have not understood the Christian concept of suffering love, they have believed they can hate their way to love, murder their way to brotherhood, lie their way to truth, war their way to peace.

—Culbert G. Rutenber

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Our wills cut across the will of God, forming the symbol of the Cross.

—Bishop R. S. Hubbard

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The missionaries made the fatal mistake

of telling the African child that he was a child of God, that he had skills, abilities and talents which he ought to develop; that he should look forward, even if not in the context of his own life span, to that day when he should be allowed to develop those skills and abilities and talents in the service of his country. That was the mistake the missionary made. He dared to proclaim that education was something which belonged to the whole process of civilization, that it was not the right of the European to bring the treasures that they had in the way of culture to another land, and to keep those treasures solely for themselves.

—Trevor Huddleston

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A missionary reported that a native in Africa stated: "Unless the Christians do more in Africa, they have done too much already."

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When a man or a community is confronted with an issue of life and death the word "save" is likely to be spoken. A child is "saved" from drowning. A man is "saved" from death by penicillin. When a community is confronted by such a measure of internal disorder or of economic chaos as to threaten its very being as a community, the leader who restores order may earn the title of "saviour of his country." It has been claimed that the Marshall Plan "saved" Western Europe. These situations present themselves as ultimate. Everything is at stake. But the issues that have this character are not confined to those in which the bodily life of an individual or the material being of a community is radically threatened. There is another death than the death of the body. A job may be the "saving" of a man, not only or not chiefly because it provides him with a means of existence, but because it restores meaning and shape to his existence. When a man is the victim of alcoholism, Alcoholics Anonymous may be his salvation bcause it restores his disintegrating manhood to human stature. A homeless or neglected child unloved and fearful and resentful, may be saved by adoption into a healthy family.

—Angus Dun, *The Saving Person* (Harper)

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It is not enough to equate God and the Church. This is a proper equation as long as the Church is God's Church, recognizable to him and employable by him. There is no magic in the name Church if it has become only a cloak for human desires and earthy purposes. The tyranny of words deludes us into thinking that what Christ calls his Church is what we call the Church. The Church is the Church when it is the continuing and unfailing fellowship of men filled with the Spirit and dominated by the life of Christ, when it is brotherhood alive and at work in the midst of a flood of denial and distrust.

—John Gray Rhind

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No one today can seriously study the life of Abraham Lincoln without being—in one way or another—emancipated.

—J. C. Penny

EDWARD W. STIMSON
FRANK B. FAGERBURG
HOMER J. R. ELFORD
JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL
JOHN SCHOTT

# The Place Where You Stand

EDWARD W. STIMSON, Dundee Presbyterian Church, Omaha, Nebraska

*Then he said "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."* Exodus 3:5

Have you ever suddenly realized that the ace where you stand is holy ground?

Moses had this experience under the most mdrum and unexpected circumstances. He as keeping sheep alone out on the edge of e desert wilderness. Maybe sheepherding romantic and inspiring work to some shep-rds. But Moses wasn't brought up to it. wasn't his native element at all. Moses as city bred, royal nurtured, brought up s the darling foster son of the princess mong all the luxury and excitement of the gyptian court. But Moses was "on the m," hiding out from Egyptian justice be-use he had killed an Egyptian overseer r beating a Hebrew slave. He had found fuge as a common sheep-herder and was eping flocks for Jethro, the priest of Mid-n. Out on the range it was lonely, bleak nd desolate—a dreary, tedious monotonous redom. He could not have liked it; but it as the best he could get to do, and he en-ured it for years.

Yet one day, out on the slopes of Mount oreb, a strangely beautiful sight caught s eye. The tradition says that "the an-el of the Lord appeared to him in a flame fire out of the midst of a bush, and the ush was burning, yet it was not consumed." ou may interpret this as you like. If you ave no difficulty taking such miracles lit-rally you will insist that as God can do ything, being all-powerful—it was just at way. If you have more respect for nat-ral law and less for verbal traditions, you ay assume that the morning sun glowed id the leaves of a rare desert plant. Those ho paint the smoke trees and brilliant rubs that grow in the deserts of our own uthwest give support to such an interpre-tion. Whatever it was, Moses was curious, nd turned aside to see, his senses alerted, is awe, that is his spiritual sensitivity, roused. Then he heard God's voice, seem-ng to come from the midst of the bush, alling him, "Moses, Moses." "Here am I," e replied. Then the voice said, "Do not ome near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

## A MATTER OF GEOGRAPHY

Holy ground? What is holy ground? In our thought it is any ground that becomes holy by association with sacred human experience, because some awe-inspiring event full of meaning and destiny for some human soul transpired there. Ground in and of itself is not holy. All ground is holy to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear! It is chiefly a matter of our sensitiveness of spirit, our spiritual perceptiveness. Elizabeth Barrett Browning expressed it in classic lines in her poem, *Aurora Leigh*:

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
> The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.

## WHERE NATURE THRILLS

Recently I was out in the yard, raking to get ready for the coming of spring, and I heard high above in the sky the calls of wild geese in flight. There they came, hundreds upon hundreds of them in their beautiful v formations, winging their long way from the gulf to the northern wilds, guided unerringly. One could not miss the thrill of it, and had to sense again the divine message which William Cullen Bryant put into unforgettable words:

> He who from zone to zone
> Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
> In the long way that I must tread alone,
> Will guide my steps aright.

Years ago Bishop Bromley Oxnam described an interview he had with one of the great spirits of the Orient. "While I was in India," he wrote, "I had the honor to talk with that great poet and religious phi-

losopher, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. I asked him what his idea of God was, and I shall never forget his answer. He said:

"When I was but a small boy, my father took me into the darkness of the jungle, just before the dawn was about to break, and he said to me, 'My son, the sweet smell of this earth is God. He is of it and in it, and it is his.'

"Then the first light of dawn struck through the darkness of the jungle, and my father said to me, 'My son, God is the light of our lives and the light of the world.'

"The birds started their singing, and my father said to me: 'My son, God is music, the music of pure souls. May you so live that you strike no note of dissonance in the harmony and beauty that is god.'"

It is the beginning of springtime now, and after refreshing rain and glorious sunshine all nature is bursting into bloom. I found myself inspired to attempt a new stanza for one of my favorite poems, "Each In His Own Tongue" by William Herbert Carruth. Carruth sings of Eovlution and Autumn and Longing and Consecration, but he misses this lovely season:

A green gauze drapes the woodland,
A birdsong fills the sky,
New grass peeps up with the crocus
And the wild geese northward fly,
And fresh on the light breeze lingers
The scent of the new-turned sod,
Some of us call it Springtime,
And others call it God.

Some with a penchant for theological exactitude and philosophical rationality may want to protest that we must not confuse the Creator wih his creation, and intellectually I will agree. But some with the blindness of a merely intellectual approach to reality may be missing the burning bush. They are like the young student, caught in the web of rationalization, who said, "Some say there is a God and some say there isn't. The truth is probably half-way between these two opinions."

How does the place where you stand look to you? Some of us need to pray the old-fashioned prayer:

Give me not scenes more charming,
give me eyes
To see the beauty that around me
lies,
To read the trials of souls, see angels
shy
Among the faces of the passers by.

## MOSES RESPONDED

Moses turned aside to see, and heard the voice of God, who identified himself as the God of his ancestors, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. But immediately he also brought into Moses' awareness the moral challenge from which he had run away. Moses had only begun in a blundering way to take the part of his own oppressed people in Egypt. And now the Lord said to him:

> "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cries because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey, . . . and I have chosen you, Moses, with all your special education and preparation for leadership in the court of Egypt for this task. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people . . . and this shall be the sign for you, when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain."

That mountain was to become for all time a holy place of first importance in human history. There Moses would bring the rabble crowd of Hebrew slaves to be trained in the truth of God. There they would receive the Ten Commandments, the basic moral law for them and for humanity, carved upon the tables of stone. There on Horeb, Mt. Sinai, they would enter into the solemn covenant with God, whereby they pledged themselves to be his obedient and faithful servants and God promised to be with them and bless them as they went into the promised land. What a holy place that was, and it had seemed to Moses just a dreary, uninteresting, worthless desert.

## WHERE A MORAL CHALLENGE IS HEARD

What is a holy place? Not just a place of strange beauty that awakens awareness of the Creator of all, but a place where God speaks to us through the voice of conscience, and calls us with the clear voice of duty, and charges us with new high unselfish purpose to serve our brothers in need, and enters into solemn covenant with us to do his will—wherever a person receives the challenge to moral heroism and the divine instruction and motivation for ethical living! That is his holy ground.

Is the place where you stand holy ground? Might it be? Would it be if you took more

me to listen when God calls your name? Once a Sunday School teacher was telling r class about God. She tried to describe m as kind, good, strong, thoughtful, lov- g; a being who could conquer the world nd meet all obstacles with courage; who uld take care of them in their distress; ho was not afraid of the dark; who could ather them into his arms when they were raid; who supplied them with all things ey needed." Then she said to these chil- en, "Does that description of God make u think of anybody you know?"

One little lad put up his hand and replied, That's my Dad."

In many more ways than we realize, our mes are holy ground, where the basic undations of character are laid, where the ve of parents gives the security and owledge of worth that gives stability and rength and balance and magnanimity to ildren's growing souls. It is from Dad at a little boy or girl may and should arn about God, learn to respond with the ving trust they will later give to God.

## WHERE WE WORK

A few weeks ago I went back to Ohio to each one Sunday, and stayed overnight the home of an Elder of the Second Pres- terian Church of Portsmouth who used be a member of my Church in Cincin- ati. He has become the manager of a brick ant, employing a large number of work- en, many of whom come from quite lim- ed backgrounds. They come out of the hills Kentucky, "briar-hoppers" they are called that region. Often they are not the easiest eople to handle. Yet this young Christian xecutive likes leading them. He told me me of his experiencs. He looks upon his ersonnel work as a challenge in Christian uman relations. They bring him all sorts problems—ethical problems, family prob- ms, personal dilemmas—because they have ccepted him as their friend and counsellor s well as their boss. He is also Superintend- nt of the Church School at Second Church, ut he doesn't know in which capacity he has he most opportunity to serve his Lord. His rick plant is a place where they make more han bricks. There character is being built, uman lives are being transformed, God's will is being revealed and learned and ac- cepted and people are being freed from slavery —the slavery of bad habits and self- ishness. The place where that man is stand- ing is holy ground.

Maybe you think your position in life is not so favorable for such service. Maybe you think you are living on the side of a moral desert, where nothing ever happens and there is no moral or spiritual oppor- tunity. Some of you are in school as pupils or as teachers. What ethically significant problems face you there in which your lead- ership and influence for good might count? Some of you serve the public in business. Some of you are public servants.

## WHERE DUTY CALLS

There is a spot in New Orleans where I should like to stand some day. It is near the site of the old slave market where a rangy lad from up the Ohio river once stood. He had floated down the Mississippi on a flatboat, and it was his first view of slaves sold at auction. When he saw a young girl being manhandled and sold, he clenched his fist and said, "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." The place where he was standing is holy ground. And the places where Christian men in the South to- day, ministers and others, are deciding to stand for conscience in today's gathering storm are holy too. And in New York and Kansas City and everywhere else where unions are in the grips of racketeers and men like Victor Reisel and common men from the rank and file dare to defy the racketeers, men stand on holy ground. Where God inspires courageous women in our community to brave the wrath of the county attorney's office in the demand for better law enforcement, the place where they stand for civic decency attains sacred significance.

For God is the Lord of righteousness and truth as well as beauty, and in every in- spiration to overcome human slavery to evil and falsehood, his voice is heard. Still he says, "Come, and I will send you to bring forth my people into their land of promise. Prepare to worship and listen for my com- mands where you are, for the place where you stand is holy ground!"

# The Hallowed Name

FRANK B. FAGERBURG, First Baptist Church, Redlands, California

*Hallowed be Thy name*—Matthew 6:9

"Our Father which art—" It is a declara- on in the present tense. Too much of our thinking and talking about God is in the past tense. Some people seem to assume that

God began His life and work at the beginning of Genesis and closed them at the end of Revelation; that he is the God of a Book instead of a living and present reality. We tell stories of what he did in men's lives in the past. Jesus talked about him and talked to him as one who was closer than his nearest neighbor. "Our Father who art—"

Whatever else Jesus believed about God he had faith in the divine transcendence. "Who art in Heaven." It has been popular in recent years to stress the immanence of God—the One who dwells in a person's heart. This may mean almost anything from a shallow pantheism which thinks of God as everywhere in general but nowhere in particular to the more modern humanism which identifies God with mankind or as someone has put it "a kind of magnified Uncle Sam."

We shall involve ourselves in no aimless talk about what heaven might mean—certainly it is where God is, which I quite understand is reasoning in a circle. But the essential significance of these words is that God is a reality above and beyond the life of man. When one calls for his help, he is not tugging upon his own spiritual bootstraps; he is taking hold of a hand above and distinct from himself.

"Hallowed be Thy name." One of the cardinal elements in the religion of the ancient Jew was reverence. Time after time we come upon the expression in the Old Testament "the fear of the Lord"; and with our different background we do not like it. But the main element in the word translated "fear" was reverence, wonder, awe. The Jew took so seriously the third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain," that he did not speak God's name at all. We are pretty certain there was a name by which the Jew knew God. But it is a lost word. The Jews themselves forgot it. No one today knows what it is. By Jesus' day so much superstition surrounded it that it could not be spoken. Just once a year the High Priest standing in the Holy of Holies of the temple could say the great name. Nor could it be written. In the manuscripts writers put down instead adonai, the word meaning Lord. Then there began the practice of writing the consonants of the Holy word to which the vowels of adonai were appended. It is this coflate word which in recent years we have translated Jehovah. However, Jehovah was most likely not the word.

But that formal word which was known as God's name was not, I am sure, what Jesus had in mind when he said, "Hallowed be Thy name." Here we come upon another interesting idea of the old Jewish world. A name was not simply an arrangement of letters arbitrarily applied to someone for distinction. To the Jew a name meant something. It was more like our idea of a nickname. It was used because it told something of a person's character. God's name in the deeper sense is what is to be held sacred. His being and character are to be held in reverence, for he is, first of all, "Holy, holy, holy."

Most of us are certain that the superstitious Jew of Jesus' day who could not speak the name made tabu by tradition was carrying the thing entirely too far. But I am also sure that we have carried our easy familiarity too far. Human experience seems to swing with the pendulum from one extreme to another. We go from an attitude of speechless awe to one of jaunty familiarity in which "the high and lifted up who inhabiteth eternity" has become a kind of indulgent grandpapa.

## LOSS OF REVERENCE

As a result there is an element of great value which has gone out of too much of our Protestant practise of religion—reverence. We have taken out the old time "fear of the Lord" which we do not like, and with it have gone respect and reverence. But the saddest part of it is that with respect and reverence goes also reality.

Go into the average Protestant church over the country before the service begins or even after it begins. The place is alive with whispering and visiting. Do the worshippers give the impression of waiting to be ushered into the presence of some important person? If a king, the president—or just some movie star—were outside the door ready to step in there would be an awesome silence. Do the worshippers give you the impression that they are standing on holy ground getting ready for the presence of the Infinite God?

When I was a child I sometimes giggled in the church service. That could not have happened if one important element had been kept in my training — reverence. I was reared either to believe that I did not meet God in church, that there was really no God to meet, or that he was one so near and so familiar and like myself that it really made no difference.

"Hallowed be Thy name" was sincerely from the heart — this means a new kind of worship experience. Then we shall stop hearing foolish talk about "Why I Don't Go To Church," for in church we will be finding something which we know we can get no-

nere else in the world. I am certain that at e bottom of much of our indifference to- ard church attendance among Protestants the fact that too many times something nique and distinctive has failed to take ace. This something unique and distinctive s failed to take place because we have not ncerely said, "Hallowed be Thy name."

### LOSS OF REALITY

When this is said sincerely there will be new experience of private prayer. The ease d informality with which we have bolted and out of the presence of God are indica- on of an attitude of unreality. We are care- l before we go tampering with an high ltage connection, for we are certain that ere is something there demanding our res- ct. When we enter another's room and ow he is there, we respectfully knock. hen Moses at the burning bush felt sure at God was in the experience, he had a con- tion that his shoes should come off for was standing on holy ground. Perhaps we ve done ourselves and our cause wrong at in Prayer Service and Young People's eetings we have too much encouraged ayer that was unprepared. From the andpoint of our text, I am certain that uch of it has been an irreverence.

Our noble teaching that God is always ady to hear us has been sometimes carried o far. It is true, but it is no excuse for a tful kind of prayer life which robs it of e assurance that a righteous Person is at e other end of the soul's conversation.

But there will be a new order of living hen we say from our heart, "Hallowed be hy name," for we shall feel a new sense of verence whenever and wherever we be- ve that God is expressing himself. It will come in the silence of a summer's evening under a star-spangled sky. It will come when some scene of unusual beauty breaks upon one's sight. It will come when some glorious music touches with its charm. But supreme- ly it will come as we meet God in people. At the bottom of our faith is the conviction that man is made in the image of God. Then in a peculiar sense do we come face to face with God in people. A new reverence for God will bring a new reverence for human per- sonality.

Indeed the rest of the prayer is condition- ed upon this. We are concerned for other men's bread and for right relations with them when we have a conviction that they are representatives of God whom we rever- ence. It is when we have lost the assurance that we harm or serve God himself as we harm or serve people that men in good con- science treat human personalities as tools, as means to an end.

A dear friend has this quotation from Walt Whitman pasted on his telephone: "In the faces of men and women, I see God." Suppose I should start a new day tomorrow reminding myself — "Each man, woman and child I face this day brings to me a bit of God." Suppose I live each day with that at- titude. Well, if from my heart I am also say- ing, "Hallowed be Thy name," it will make all the days different and — better.

But this text will give me, too, a new love and reverence for Jesus. God's name? If by that I mean God's character — then I have learned it in Jesus. All that I want or hope for in God I have found in Him. "Hallow- ed be Thy name." Let me say it sincerely and a new hymn of praise to Christ is sung in my heart.

## Take Time to Be Holy

HOMER J. R. ELFORD, Trinity Methodist Church, Youngstown, Ohio

In reciting the Ten Commandments we sually abbreviate the fourth one and say, uite simply, "Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy." That is only the first of four erses which make up this command. The st read as follows: "Six days shalt thou bor, and do all thy work: But the seventh ay is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy on, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor hy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy tranger that is within thy gates: For in six ays the Lord made heaven and earth, the ea, and all that in them is, and rested the eventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Scholars point out that the observance of rest days was fairly common among most primitive races. While some claim that for nomadic peoples, such as the Israelites of the days of Moses, life was too unpredictable to enable them always to observe a given day as a day of rest, we may believe that they did set aside regular days for physical rest and spiritual refreshment. However long it may have taken for the Hebrews to develop the laws and rituals which came to be a part of Sabbath observance, we do know that by the time of Jesus it had become such a com- plicated matter that its spiritual meaning

was in danger of being lost.

Originally this commandment may have been given to provide the children and servants with some opportunities for respite from their labors. One commentator has pointed out that the list of those who are to rest on the Sabbath is interesting in that it does not mention mothers. He writes, "When mother protests that after washing, dressing, and feeding the children, getting her husband's Sunday clothes ready, preparing the Sunday dinner, and arriving at church herself nearly on time, she objects to the minister giving out as an opening hymn, 'O day of rest and gladness,' her attention should be called to the fact that the Fourth Commandment says nothing at all about mother resting on the Sabbath." It is quite obvious that there are many of us who must feel that this commandment left us out of the list of those who should not do any labor. Minister's children have always had a hard time understanding how their fathers could justify their actions with their preachments on this subject, and undoubtedly those who claim that the preacher only works one day a week have an equally difficult time at this point.

Most of us are familiar with the fact that Christians came to adopt the first day of the week, or Sunday, as against the Jewish seventh day, or our Saturday, as their Sabbath because it was on the first day of the week that Jesus rose from the tomb. The early Christians cast aside most of the Jewish laws regarding Sabbath observance, but kept the principle which this commandment enjoined; namely, that it should be a day of rest and spiritual renewal. In the Eighth Century, Charlemagne gave a decree which forbade all ordinary labor on Sunday, and through all the centuries since, Sunday has been set aside by Christian people as a day of worship, a day for renewing the body, mind and spirit by drinking deeply from God's fountains. We remember the words of Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," and those who seek to carry out the spirit of Jesus use this day for purposes which will draw them closer to God.

It is true that our present-day economy often leaves no choice to the individual as to what he will do about the keeping of the letter of this law. Mills often operate around the clock, seven days a week, and it is contended that someone must be there to run them all the time. In those instances, however, few workers must report for duty every Sunday of the month. Doctors, nurses, policemen, firemen, and others who have responsibilities for the health and welfare o people must also work on Sunday, but toda they, too, have schedules which permit som rest during the week and some free Sundays. It is very easy for us to think of many reasons why it is impractical, if not impossible for people today to observe the letter of thi law. But if we stop here we have misse the whole point of this commandment whic is designed for our own benefit.

The commandment was originally give to enjoin everyone to remember God. True our bodies must have some rest, but that i not the chief reason for observing the da of rest. A Twelfth Century Jewish table hymn expresses the real thought behind thi commandment: "I keep the Sabbath, Go keeps me: a covenant eternally." This com mandment is a sacred reminder that God ha created us; that he has blessed us, and w should take time out from our busy endeav or to acknowledge him; to worship him t try to learn more about what He wants u to become and to do with this wonderful lif he has loaned us.

There are those who choose to neglect th first statement of the commandment, "Re member the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," and embrace only the latter statements abou resting on the Sabbath. They interpret thi shorter stating of the law to mean that it i simply a day on which to do what yo please; or don't make time for doing on th other six days of the week — putting on th storm windows, washing the car, raking th leaves, or just sleeping after a strenuou week, all too often climaxed by late hours o Saturday night. Others claim that they ca keep the day in a holy manner just as wel on the golf course or in a boat on the lake traveling on the highway, as in church. True God is on the golf course and in the out-of doors, for God is everywhere. But it is ver seldom that people go to the golf course t worship; most of them go there to play golf And while God is in the out-of-doors, let' be honest and admit that these activitie should not take precedence over regular wor ship in God's house where we read his word sing hymns of praise, and pray for his con tinuing presence. Remembering the Sabbat day and keeping it holy is not just the keep ing of a set of rules; it is an attitude of th soul, and only as we have this reverent at titude, using this day for purposes whic will truly enrich our souls, can we feel tha we are keeping this commandment.

# eeing God Face to Face

OHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

*And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* —Genesis 32:30

On one occasion Alfred Tennyson asked is friend, the English artist Watts, to exain what he conceded to be the chief duty a portrait painter. Watts replied in effect at his task was not merely to produce a keness of his subject, but to reveal someing of his character. Tennyson thereupon mbodied the artist's answer in "The Idylls the King":

> As when a painter, poring on a face,
> Divinely, thro' all hindrance finds the man
> Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
> The shape and color of a mind and life,
> Lives for his children . . .

Just as a portrait painter, at his best, nows the real man, so the authors of the istorical books of the Old Testament find ne man behind the outer facade of personlity and reveal him to us. If he has defects f character no attempt is made to gloss em over. If he is noble, his nobility shines rth undimmed.

As Oliver Cromwell was seated, on one ocsion, for a portrait, he observed the efforts f the artist to eliminate a slight disfiguraon on his face. The Lord Protector of Engnd thundered, "Paint me wart and all!"

That is exactly what the biographers of ne Old and the New Testament have done. hey painted in the blemishes as well as the auties of the characters they were reportng.

It would be difficult to find a more fitting lustration of what we have been thinking an is afforded by the life of Jacob. He had lenty of defects, and they were not overooked. He was shrewd, calculating, indusrious, with a warped character. He had a air for hard bargaining, and found it easy cut corners. He did not hew to the line truthfulness and honesty.

In his defense it must be admitted that he ad a very bad start. His home environment as a serious handicap. I have often wonered why the Church of England in its marage service employed these words: "As saac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, these persons may surely perform and eep the vow and covenant betwixt them made." It would in truth have been better if in the marriage service a prayer had been inserted to the effect that the newly-married couple might not keep their vows after the fashion of Jacob and Rebecca. In their case we see that which always produces tragic consequences — a house divided against itself. The father and the elder son were on one side; the mother and the younger on the other. The wife takes advantage of her husband's blindness to cheat the elder son out of the blessing to which he was entitled, and trains her younger son in falsehood and deception. Despite the beautiful romance with which Isaac and Rebecca's love story begins, it ends in sordidness.

## STAMP OF CHARACTER

Professor George Adam Smith, one of the ablest of Old Testament scholars, says: "The fear of God was not present; because with the romance there was no religion, and with the giving of one heart to the other there was no surrender of both to God." May not this be the reason why so many marriages are failing in America today? There are exceptions, of course, but in the main our children will carry with them through life the impact and impressions of their home life and of the character of their parents. Whatever else we bequeath to our children, let us not forget to give to them a sense of God and his government of life. Not all mothers have been a blessing to their children. Much of the falseness of Jacob's mother was stamped on his character. Deceitfulness flowed in his veins.

Now we see him fleeing to far-off Padan Aram to his mother's brother to escape the wrath of Esau, his own brother, whom he had shamefully betrayed.

Laban, the uncle, gives Jacob a warm and hearty welcome, befitting a nephew, but Laban was not long in demonstrating that he was his sister's brother.

Treachery seemed to run in that family. Laban's relations with his nephew Jacob were characterized throughout by duplicity. Jacob was cheated out of his wages, out of his wife, out of all solemn obligations and promises that Laban had made to him. But it was not long until Jacob demonstrated that he was no novice when it came to double-dealing. He proceeded to cheat his

uncle out of his cattle. Then, as if to round out the picture nicely, Rachel, Laban's daughter, stole her father's household gods.

Jacob's sojourn with Laban is one pitiful chapter of fraud. There is but one gleam of light in it all—Jacob's love for Rachel. It is described in these graphic and moving words: "Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her."

But the climax, the supreme moment, in the life of this young man with the twisted character came when he turned back to Canaan from Padan Aram. The crisis was reached the night before he was to met Esau.

A great fear clutched at the heart of Jacob, for turning homeward, he had to face again the brother whom he had defrauded. Always resourceful, however, he chose the finest and whitest of his cattle and of his sheep and of his oxen and of his camels, and he sent them forward in bands to his brother as a present to appease his bitter, flaming wrath. But the scouts bring back the disturbing word that Esau scarcely glances at these lowing milk-white kine, but, instead, buckles on his armour and advances with four hundred men.

This, I say, was the supreme moment of Jacob's life — the moment for which all the rest was but a prelude.

As night begins to fall, Jacob rests beside the brook Jabbok, having sent the children and the women away to a place of safety. He waits there in the darkness alone with God.

## ALONE WITH GOD

It is always an eventful hour in the life of any man when he is alone with God; when he takes his life, and looking back over it, asks himself: "Exactly what have I made of it all?"

First of all, Jacob realized that he had become rich and successful. He had left home a penniless fugitive, a wanderer on the face of the earth, his only possessions the clothing he wore, and the little bundle his mother had thrust under his arm, containing bread and dates and oil for his journey. By dint of shrewdness and hard work and scheming he had become one of the richest men in all Palestine. He had a great retinue of servants and of flocks and of herds. But somehow he was dissatisfied that night, and he was afraid. His past had caught up with him, and God help any of us in the moment when the past catches up with us and we have no defense.

There in the loneliness and darkness of the night with the sound of the rushing brook in his ears, and only God for his companio he looked steadfastly at his life, and, som how, many of those things for which he ha struggled and labored and cheated no seemed paltry and insignificant. Jacob r membered that he had left God out of h reckoning and that he had forgotten to la up "treasure in heaven where neither mot nor rust can corrupt, and where no thief ca break through and steal."

Once before he had been alone with Go in the mountains near Bethel, but it mad little change in his life. After his fashion, h tried to drive a hard bargain even with Go This is the prayer he made: "If God will b with me and will keep me in the way that go and will give me bread to eat and rain ent to put on, so that I come again to m father's house in peace, then shall the Lor be my God." If God will supply all my want and grant me prosperity and preserve m from every danger, then he will be my God

## NIGHT CONTEST

But there was no bargaining that lonel night by the brook Jabbok. Instead he bega that strange contest in the darkness. I don think Jacob ever really understood wha happened to him that night. The Scriptur says: "And Jacob was left alone, and ther wrestled a man with him until the breakin of the day."

As Jacob wrestled, at times that mysti wrestler in the darkness seemed to be hi brother, Esau, seeking vengeance; at th next moment it was his better self wrestlin with the ignoble self and seeking to over throw it; and then it was God with whom h was grappling. Whoever that Presence was the crafty, scheming Jacob had met hi match. Here was strength he could not over come; here was skill he could not master And now, exhausted, he clings, and there i not a word about food and raiment. There i not a word about prosperity and protection One cry only he utters: "I will not let the go except thou bless me." Jacob clinging wa mightier than Jacob wrestling.

Jacob learned that night what all of u must understand: that surrender to God i the condition of spiritual effectiveness an power. Jacob received the blessing and a nev name.

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob the Supplanter, the Deceiver, but Israel, fo as a Prince hast thou power with God an with men and hast prevailed. And he blesse him there."

"And Jacob called the name of the plac Peniel, for I have seen God face to face . . .'

Our chief purpose in looking at this ancient story is not for its dramatic quality, but to see what lessons it may teach us in the living present. It is not an exaggeration to say that the experience of Jacob more than three thousand years ago is parelleled in the lives of multitudes today.

## WORSHIP OF SUCCESS

Indeed, the unregenerate Jacob, the over-ambitious, the hard-driving seeker of success has his prototype in a large segment of American civilization. We worship success. We have made a god of it, and before its shrine tens of thousands bow in homage. Our supreme objective is to surpass all others by our achievements.

This nation is full of men and women who are hurling themselves into life with such reckless abandon that they are wringing themselves physically and spiritually dry. Their eyes are fastened on the glittering prize of material success. At last with one supreme effort it is in their grasp. They have reached the goal only to find that the badge of their success is a stomach ulcer or a thrombosis.

There is something about material success that but for the grace of God destroys spirituality in the human heart, because such success brings power, and power deludes its possessor into the belief that he is greater than God. When a man gets that idea into his head he is dangerous to himself and to everybody else.

A few months ago I sat in the study of a well-known Presbyterian minister. He introduced me to a young alert-looking business man. After the young man had gone, the minister's face clouded, and he said: "That is one of the ablest young men I have in my church. He is going far and he is getting there fast, but I am afraid for him."

I asked: "Why are you afraid?"

He replied: "He has a wife and two dear little children. In my experience in the ministry I have seen many men like him go to pieces in the very moment of achieving success. Prosperity and success are the twin rocks on which many a happy home and a useful life has been wrecked. It is hard," the minister concluded, "for many of our American men to stand success and prosperity."

If you wish to verify the truth of this minister's words just look at the leadership in the business and professional life of many of our great American cities. In many cases they are men who once had a vital religious experience and a happy home life. Today they have neither, and their children, faced with a divided allegiance, are bewildered and frustrated.

## TOO HIGH A PRICE

It is too high a price to pay for material success. It is not success in any true understanding of the word. What consummate folly for any man, no matter how great his business, professional, or political achievements, to think that he no longer needs God or that he can dispense with the Ten Commandments, or that he no longer owes an obligation to Christ's Church or His Kingdom!

Strut as he will for his brief day on life's stage, the time will come when he will find himself in a darkened room, with the shades drawn, and everyone walking on tiptoe and conversing in whispers. All his prestige and power will vanish with his last expiring breath, and his soul, stripped of the accumulations of a lifetime, will stand naked and alone before its Maker, for "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we shall carry nothing out." The scales of Divine justice will sway, and through all the corridors of eternity will be heard the decree: "Weighed in the balances and found wanting." The poor little man who thought he was bigger than God!

But who is there of us today that is not found wanting? What have you made of life? What have you made of yourself? What have you contributed to the world and to your fellowmen? Is the world one whit happier and better because you passed this way? What have you accumulated of the true riches that death cannot destroy?

May God grant unto us the wisdom of Jacob who surrendered his life to the One who alone could make him great.

# The Holy Spirit

JOHN SCHOTT, Swarthmore Presbyterian Church, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is one of the great doctrines of our Church. But if a minister were to announce this topic as the theme of his sermon, a number of his people would gasp or groan. "Hard enough is it," they would say, "to keep awake during the sermon under ordinary circumstances, without your lulling us to sleep with some

philosophical speculation or theological jargon." It is, of course, difficult for most people to struggle through a mental labyrinth. But, in a way, the doctrine of the Trinity is not as complicated and baffling as one might think. Instead it seems a very simple method for explaining a very obvious fact.

In formulating the doctrine of the Trinity, Christian theologians were trying to explain the Church's belief in a God who has manifested Himself in three different and distinct ways. He is, of course, the transcendent God, high and lifted up, the creator and sustainer of life. With majestic cadence we are told in the very first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Again in the Psalms we read: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou are mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

He is a transcendent God, and yet He is not a God who dwells in the heavens above, unmoved or unconcerned about the needs of his people. Most decidedly not, for in some unique manner, he has visited his people. He has revealed himself through Jesus Christ, who walked the Palestinian Hills two thousand years ago.

There are some branches of the church which claim that Jesus was "very God of very God, begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father." To others, however, this is a very complex theological concept which baffles human understanding. These people rather think of Jesus as the greatest person the world has ever known, and in simple faith, along with St. Paul, confess that, in some mysterious way, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

More books have been written about Jesus, more attempts have been made to explain and interpret him to succeeding generations, than about any other person. He was born in a manger, was brought up in a simple Nazarene home in the back hills of Galilee, never went to college, never wrote a book, never traveled more than a hundred miles from his birthplace, and yet he has toppled emperors from their thrones, has changed the destiny of man, has compelled the world's history to be rewritten, and remains the most compelling, the most challenging person that the world has ever known.

More than that, if anyone today want to know what God is like, and what his wil for this world is, one is referred to th simple Galilean. In this Jesus of Nazareth God has given to us a distinct revelation o himself and his will. That is why the churc fathers were compelled to say that God i not only a transcendent God, but a God wh had revealed himself in an extraordinar and unique fashion through Jesus Christ God is high and lifted up, but at a certai period of history, in a particular place, an in an extraordinary individual, he has mad himself known to the world.

## REVELATION IN CHRIST

We Christians believe in a transcenden God, and in a God who uniquely revealed himself in Jesus Christ. But, in the thir place, we believe in a God who still is a work in the universe and dwells in you heart and mine. This is what is known a the doctrine of the indwelling Holy Spirit, o as the Quakers say of the Inner Light. I other words, God is resident to a greater o lesser degree in all of us.

Paul made this crystal clear when h spoke to the Athenians gathered on Mar Hill. The Athenians had had a long and com mendable record as philosophers. Paul tell us that in his day their great indoor or out door sport was telling and hearing some nev thing. Naturally when he came to this mag nificent city and proclaimed his new an startling religion, they immediately arrang ed a hearing for him. Being one of the mos brilliant men of his day and a keen debater Paul, in a most skillful and clever manner immediately won their interest and attentio for he said, "Men of Athens, I perceive tha in every way you are very religious. For a I passed along and observed the objects o your worship, I found also an altar with thi inscription, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore, you worship as unknown, this proclaim to you."

He then continued by telling them not only that this God was the creator of the uni verse, that it was he who had made of on blood all nations of men for to dwell on th face of the earth, but that, and here are hi very significant words, "he is not far from each one of us, for 'in him we live and mov and have our being.'" In other words, Pau claimed that God is an all-pervasive imman ent presence in this world of ours, that h lives in the hearts of all of us, that he is no limited to one locality or to one epoch of his tory, that he is present with us for "in hin we live and move and have our being."

If statistics can be trusted, it seems that ere are very few committed atheists in nerica. According to a recent nation-wide rvey sponsored by "The Ladies Home urnal," 95% of the American people be- ve in God. There are a few of a scientific me of mind who insist upon positive oof, who courteously but firmly refuse to cept on faith a belief in God, as the omni- tent and sovereign ruler of the world. ey are, however, a pronounced minority, , looking out upon the world and noticing unity, its orderliness, its simplicity and intelligibility, most of us detect in it the ndwork of the living God.

We also have a great reverence and res- t for the lowly Nazarene, the Jesus of lilee. As someone has very well said, "If a eat general or statesman were to enter is room, we would all stand, but if Jesus re to enter, we would instinctively fall our knees." He is, indeed, the highest, best revelation in time of God. In him d has, indeed, visited his people and made mself known to us. It would, of course, be ry easy to start an endless argument about s true nature and mission, but mental gym- stics are of little profit. Suffice it to say at he will forever remain a challenge as ll as an inspiration to all the great minds all ages.

## INDWELLING GOD

We believe in a transcendent God, also Jesus as the highest and best revelation God's will and purpose for this turbulent rld. But what about the Holy Spirit? Do accept him and have we made him an tegral part of our thinking? Does God ell in you? In Acts 19, we are told that en Paul came to Ephesus, he found some nfessing Christians to whom he put this range question: "Have you received the ly Christ since you believed?" And they plied, "No we have never heard that there a Holy Spirit." Paul then told them of the ly Spirit, and baptized them into a new d courageous type of life.

To many men, the doctrine of the Trinity very baffling and mysterious. That is, in- ed, most unfortunate, for it is one of the st sublime theological concepts which has er been formulated. In fact, it almost ems too good to be true. As Christians, we lieve in the triune God, a transcendent d, the creator and sustainer of life, but is not some vague, uncertain entity whose aracter we cannot understand. He has not ft us in the dark, for if we want to know hat he is like, we need only look to Jesus. In this lowly Galilean, God has given to the world a unique and distinct revelation of himself. In and through Jesus we learn of God as a God of love; a sacrificial, redemptive God. But, believe it or not, that God is not far removed from his people today, for he is a God who will dwell in your heart and my heart. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Those words are from the Book of Revelation. St. Paul expressed that truth differently. In his speech to the Athenians, he said, "He is not far from each one of us, for in him we live, and move and have our being."

In the Gospel of St. John, the same idea is expressed in a different figure of speech. There we are told that the relationship between God and us should be like that between the vine and its branches: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Here the Apostle John is urging us to cultivate a mystical oneness with God, to think God's thoughts after Him, to have the mind of Christ in us, to practice the presence of God in our lives. One of the hymns of our church, written by John Oxenham, expresses this thought most beautifully:

Mid all the traffic of the ways—Turmoils without, within —
Make in my heart a quiet place, And come and dwell therein:

A little shrine of quietness, All sacred to Thyself,
Where Thou shalt all my soul possess, And I may find myself;

A little place of mystic grace, Of self and sin swept bare,
Where I may look upon Thy face, And talk with Thee in prayer.

## EVIDENCES OF THE SPIRIT

This mystical awareness of God is, of course, nothing esoteric or bizarre. It does not mean that one is subject to trances or visions, or speaks in some strange tongue. "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" How does a person know that he has the Holy Spirit in him? Here is a very convincing test. In the Epistle to the Galatians we read: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Do you remember those words of Emerson: "Don't tell me who you are. Your actions

speak so loudly, I can't hear what you say." On the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren in the magnificent St. Paul's Cathedral in London which he designed are the words: "If you would see his monument, look around." A man's religion, like his character, is not measured by how noisily he shouts his virtues from the housetops or how arrogantly he parades them before men. "A man's a man for a' that, and all that." So is it with our religion. Regardless of how religious we claim we are or how many ecclesiastical chores we perform, our religion is to be tested by the type of life we live. Are you a Christian? Does God dwell in you? Test yourself. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

John Woolman was an extraordinary Christian who took his religion seriously. Up and down the Colonies he went, crying out against slavery, claiming that all of God's children should be free. Whenever he was compelled to stay in a home where there were slaves, he felt uneasy and did not leave without first offering money to the host for the services which the slave rendered him. He also took every opportunity to talk quietly and persuasively to these slave owners about what he considered an iniquitous and unchristian traffic in human souls. In like manner, he championed the Indian and the oppressed people in England. Woolman believed in the Inner Light. He believed that if all of us would only open our hearts to God, God would speak to us directly and in a most personal manner. He also maintained that religion was not something to believe, but rather a way of life. To Woolman it meant patience and perseverence, courage and humility, resolute determination tempered by quiet persuasiveness, all of this in a determined effort to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Woolman was, indeed, motivated by love.

So also was it with Florence Nightingale who was reared in a very cultured, refined English home. Diligently her father had trained her to play an important role in society, to be a lady of leisure and to conduct herself with becoming dignity and gentility. But all about her were people in dire need and distress, and it tortured her sensitive soul that so little was being done to alleviate the conditions of these unfortunate children of God. Gradually a sense of mission took hold of her and she decided to dedicate herself to the nursing profession which, at that time, was in frightful disrepute. Most nurses were cheap drunkards who neglected their patients and generally conducted themselv in a most disgusting and repulsive manne But in spite of her parents' vigorous pr tests, she prepared herself for this profe sion. Today she is honored and revered one of the great benefactors of mankind.

So also is it with Albert Schweitzer. would have been so easy for him to contin as a professor at the University of Stras bourg, enjoying the leisure and comfort a pleasant academic atmosphere. But so di turbed was he by the injustices of the whi traders among the savages of Africa, that decided to atone with his own life for the sin and do what he could to heal the disease body of these ignorant children of God. F more than forty years he has continued his appointed task. Today when one wan to know what it means to have the Ho Spirit in one's heart, he need only look the stirring record of John Woolman, Flo ence Nightingale and Albert Schweitze "Have you received the Holy Spirit sin you believed?" "The fruit of the spirit love." It is not an abstract or theoretic love, but a genuine sacrificial love for t last, the lost, the least of God's children.

## JOY OF THE SPIRIT

The fruit of the spirit is also joy. So years ago Rufus M. Jones asked the famou Roman Catholic mystic of England, Bar von Hugel, to list the qualities of a saint. H mentioned four. First, said Baron von H gel, he must be loyal to the faith of t Church. Secondly, he must give convincin demonstration of heroism. Thirdly, he mu be the recipient of powers beyond his ordi ary capacities. But above everything el this brilliant and devout man maintain that a saint had to be radiant. Certainly was pre-eminently that characteristic whi swept so many fine people into the ear Church. Tertullian admitted that he w brought to Christianity not by his studies Holy Scriptures, but because he had seen t triumphant spirit of the Christians and h eagerly coveted for himself the inner co fort and joy which they so richly possesse

"These words have I spoken unto you says Jesus, "that my joy may be in you, a that your joy may be made full." As Chris ians we should be the happiest people in t world. The story is told of a Christian wh having been brought before a tyrant, w commanded to renounce his faith. When t Christian refused, the tyrant said, "Then I take all your money from you." The Chris ian only replied, "You can't, for my treasu is in Heaven." Then said the tyrant, "I'll ta

your friends away from you," to which Chrisian answered, "You may take all of earthly friends away, but I'll still have riend who sticketh closer than a brother." hen I'll banish you from the kingdom," d the tyrant, in a very vehement manner. hat will do me no harm," replied the ristian, "for the earth is the Lord's and fullness thereof, the world and they that ell therein." "Then I'll kill you," said the ant. The Christian evinced no distress l calmly replied, "You can't destroy me, my life is hid with Christ."

## HIS PERFECT PEACE

There is something very tragic about the of Jesus. He was born, we are told, like outcast in a stable; there was no room for in the inn. He came unto his own, and own received him not. He was rejected by his family, denied by his disciples, credited by the religious leaders of his , and finally nailed to a cross, and buried a borrowed tomb. Throughout all of it, wever, Jesus possessed an inner serenity, ace, power and joy; he lived triumphantly l confidently, knowing that nothing could arate him from the love of God. As ristians we should be the most joyous of ple, for in spite of what happens to us, need not fear knowing that underneath the everlasting arms, that he will keep us in perfect peace if our minds are set steadfastly on him.

Christianity is a sublime religion. It tells us that God is a transcendent God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. It also affirms that in a distinct period of history, in Jesus, God has given to the world a unique revelation of his nature and his will. But our religion also assures us that God is not far removed from us, that he will dwell in your heart and mind, giving us inner serenity, inexpressible joy and unconquerable power, if we will but make room for Him in our hearts.

In the Epistle to Diognetus, an old letter coming to us from the Second Century, an unknown writer voiced a very prophetic word about the Christians of his time when he wrote: "They hold the world together." This is, indeed, a turbulent and troublesome era, a time when the world stands desperately in need of joyous, loving souls who will hold the world together and counteract the disintegrating forces which are plunging the people of the earth toward a cataclysmic end.

The fruit of the spirit is pre-eminently love and joy. But it also reflects itself in a number of other redeeming virtues, such as patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The world stands desperately in need of such God-empowered and God-inspired individuals. "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?"